

The Intelligencer.

CENTENNIAL SKETCHES.

Random Recollections of Belmont County, Ohio.

BY ISAAC H. PATTERSON, ESQ.

Editor of the Intelligencer.

In attempting to give some reminiscences of the early days of Belmont county, we find the task more difficult than anticipated. Had we commenced a month ago, a much more interesting collection of items would have resulted. Death has left very few of our old citizens who could have furnished items of information. We trust your readers will accept the following sketches kindly, and that some other pen will take up the complete subject.

Belmont county was established September 17, 1801, by proclamation of Arthur St. Clair, Governor, being the tenth and last county formed in the Northwest Territory. The name Belmont is derived from the French words meaning "Beautiful Mountains."

Belmont county was one of the earliest settled within the State of Ohio.

Probably the first settlement was made by Captain Joseph Kirkwood on the site of the town of Bridgeport. He erected a house on the south side of the creek about 1799. Captain Kirkwood came from Delaware, and was the gallant and unwarlike Captain Kirkwood of the Revolutionary War.

The township was named in honor of the Delaware line, frequent and honorable, to which he was in Lee's memoir of the Southern campaign. He fought with distinguished gallantry through the war, and was in the bloody battles of Camden, Hobbsville, and the Battle of the Clouds.

The first regular court in Belmont county was held at the town of Pultney, a mile and a half below the town of Bridgeport. There was quite a town laid out at this place on paper in 1801 by Daniel McElherren. In the records of the court the town was called "Pultney," and the place, as shown on the Recorder's books, presents quite a different appearance. Squares for court house, jail, market house and churches were duly marked out. By a musty old court document we find that at November term, 1801, "The court do order that there be built in the town of Pultney, on the public square, a brick house, to be two stories high in the clear, twelve feet high in the first story, to be occupied as a court house for the county." We find another interesting relic regarding public buildings at this term. "It is ordered by the court that a house be erected, to be known by the name of the town of Pultney, with a single roof, strongly built, with a log partition across the centre, to be occupied as a Jail."

The first Commissioners of Belmont county were William Bell, Daniel Dill, and John Lewis. This Dill was probably the "Dillie" who gave the name to the fort a few miles below, and also to "Dillie's Bottom," now owned by Col. John H. Thompson.

Judge Calvin Pease was the first Judge in the county for County Court. He came from the neighborhood of the Western Reserve. There was a court previous to this time composed of magistrates of the county. Here is a copy of "The minutes and proceedings of the Court of General Quarter Sessions for the Peace for Belmont county in the Territory of the United States northwest of the River Ohio, held at Pultney in pursuance of a proclamation of His Excellency, Arthur St. Clair, Esquire, Governor of the Territory, November session, 1801."

David Lockwood, Daniel McElherren, Jacob Repshire, Esquires, composing the Court, and the Grand Jury, to-wit: Notley Hayes, Patrick White, John King, Anthony Riger, Joshua Bailey, Cephus Cary, Joseph Findley, Matthew McElherren, Martin Perry, Robert Duff, John McElherren, Robert Burdick, John Wall, Abraham Emerine, Richard Hardesty, John Lamb, Robert Giffen, Henry Leep, Samuel Baras, George Miller, Archibald Smith, Andrew . . .

This was probably the first grand jury in Belmont county—23, an odd number. We find that at the November session, 1801, John Woolford was recommended as a proper person to keep a house of entertainment on the road leading from the "River Ohio to Chillicothe," and an indefinite location at this date, but a very popular route to "keep a house" on, judging from the number of applicants for license. Can any one give light as to the location of this road?

We find also about the same time, license for "Zane's Road." The National Road occupies nearly the site of the old "Zane road."

In 1801 the court ordered that a road should be opened from the town of Pultney to Newelstown, St. Clairsville, Jacob Coleman and . . .

In the same year, 1801, a road was opened from Major Abraham Martin's Ferry to intersect a road from Peter Henderson's, at Tilton's Ferry, near the mouth of Short Creek.

In 1801, Charles Hammond was appointed by the court to act as Prosecutor in the Attorney General's. He was "legally" appointed in 1802 by the Attorney General, a nephew of General St. Clair. At the February term, 1802, he was appointed an indictment against Jacob was one of the magistrates holding court the previous year, and was twice indicted at this term for the same offense. Assault and battery was a frequent cause of trouble about that time.

The first church in the settlement, that we learn of, was near the mouth of "Jug Run," on the farm now owned by Major Thompson.

The first Presbyterian Church was merely a log cabin, on the grounds of the United States Army, near the mouth of Jug Run. The cabin church was put up about 1798, and occupied until 1808, when a larger and more comfortable log building was erected on the same spot. That second building was used until 1822, when the congregation moved to a brick building, which was destroyed by fire in 1841. In 1843 the present church building was erected.

Rev. Joseph Anderson, the first pastor of the Presbyterian Church, was installed in 1800, and occupied the pulpit for thirty years. He was the first Presbyterian minister ordered west of the Ohio river. He died at Monticello, Missouri, in 1847.

The Methodist Church of St. Clairsville—where we learn nothing definite of its early history.

The old church building which was probably erected as early as 1810 stood on the ground of the county north side of town. This was a large frame building. It was taken down about 1830, and a brick building erected on the present location. 1801, the house was rebuilt and much improved.

Immediately opposite the present Methodist Church stood the Episcopal Church building, built 1822. The congregation becoming scattered it was used for some years by the Associate Reform Church, and after that remained unoccupied, and about 1822 it fell down and the ground was sold.

The Associate Reform, now the United Presbyterian Church building, was erected about 1833, on the south side of the river. The building was modern and improved, with modern improvements.

The Friends or Quakers at one time numerous have almost entirely disappeared. The meeting house was taken down in 1875.

St. Clairsville was laid out in 1799 by David Newell, and was called Newelstown until 1804 at which time Gov. Arthur St. Clair removed the county seat from "Pultney" to Newelstown at the name of St. Clairsville, in honor of the Governor, who was given the place. Newell was a cousin of the Governor, and it was through his influence that the county seat was changed.

The court was removed from Pultney to St. Clairsville in the year 1804, April term. The Judges Jonathan Briggs, Samuel Hamilton and William Springs, Esq. At this April term we find the State of Ohio vs. Peter Sunderland, indicted for murder—the killing of John Holtz. The prisoner pleaded not guilty. The jury returned a verdict of not guilty. The court was removed to St. Clairsville, and the prisoner was committed to jail.

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through Belmont county in 1851-52, J. H. Sullivan President. Below we give a comparison of the value of real and personal property as returned for taxation, showing the increase in each township in the last five years:

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